

REMARKS

The Office action dated April 21, 2006, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in response thereto.

Claims 1, 4, and 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Barry (USP 6,851,688). The '688 patent discloses a steering linkage assembly that includes a tie rod 22 and a drag link 24, which are connected to a steering knuckle 12 by a ball joint unit 28. The ball joint unit 28 which includes a stud having two parts, an upper part 30a and a lower part 30b, which extend through a hole in the steering arm 20 and employ first and second ball joints 34, 36. Two links are connected by the ball joint are the drag link 24, which is shown in Figure 4 at the upper end of the stud, and the tie rod 22, which is located at the lower end of the stud.

Claim 1 recites that the body of the stabilizer bar is formed with a cylindrical surface. Neither the tie rod 22 nor the drag link 24 of the '688 patent is formed with a spherical surface at the location of the stud 30.

Claim 1 also says that the body portion of the end link has a concave spherical inner support surface. The corresponding component of the assembly shown in Figure 4 of the '688 patent shows that the end link 22 is formed with a spherical surface. The stud 30 is formed with a cylindrical surface. The assembly of the '688 does not correspond to claim 1. It has a cylindrical surface formed on a stud and a convex spherical surface formed on the end link, an inverted arrangement from the stabilizer bar defined by claim 1.

Claims 1, 4, and 21-23 should not be rejected with reference to the '688 patent because USP 6,851,688 does not anticipate those claims.

Claims 1, 21, and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hynds et al. (USP 5,186,486) in view of Kluting (USP 5,501,421). The Office action says that the elastomeric element 54 of the '486 patent is a spherical bearing, but there is no disclosure in the '486 patent that indicates that the elastomeric element has a spherical surface. The cross section shown in Figure 3, taken through

plane 3-3 of Figure 2, shows the bearing having a cylindrical cross section, not a spherical cross section, as recited in claim 1.

The Office action acknowledges that the '486 patent fails to show the link having a concave inner support and the bearing having a convex outer surface. To overcome this deficiency, it cites the '421 patent for teaching a vehicle bar support comprising a spherical bearing 5 having a convex outer surface and a link 1 having a concave inner support surface. The '421 patent shows and describes a link 1 fitted within a bore 7, into which is fitted a bearing raceway 6 located between the bearing 5 and link 1. The raceway 6 is fitted within the bore 7 with an interference fit that prevents rotation and axial displacement relative to link 1.

But claims 1 and 21 of the present application recite that the end link includes a body portion having a bore in the form of a concave spherical inner support surface, whereas the devices disclosed in the '421 patent teach a link 1 having a cylindrical inner support surface, and a bearing raceway 6 interposed between a cylindrical bore 7 and a spherical surface. Therefore, the stabilizer bar defined by Claims 1, 21 and 22 is neither taught or suggested by the combination that would result by combining the teachings of the '421 patent and the '486 patent. Furthermore, there is no teaching or suggestion in either of the '486 or '421 patents that the body is secured to the end link, whereas claims 1 and 21 define the invention in these terms.

Claims 4, 6, 7, and 23-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hynds et al. (presumably USP 5,186,486) and the '421 patent in view of Joerg et al (USP 6,257,602). The Office action acknowledges that neither the '486 patent nor the '421 patent show a lock washer. The '602 patent is cited for allegedly teaching a lock washer (4) used to engage frictionally the outer surface of a body. The spacer clip 4 of the '602 patent does not secure collar 3 to rack 1. Instead, the spacer clip 4 is secured to the rack 2 and moves with the rack 1 among the left L, center C, and right R positions shown in Figure 5. The collar 3 abuts the housing 7 of the rack to limit the steering angle. The maximum steering travel of the rack 1 can be reduced by mounting a spacer clip 4 at both ends of the rack 1 adjacent the annular

collar 3. In this way the magnitude of reduction of the steering angle is determined by the thickness of the spacer clip 4, or the number of the spacer clips used. (Sec col. 2, l. 53 – col. 4, l. 11). The thickness of the spacer clips 4 determines the range of the steering angle. The spacer clip 4 does not secure collar 3 to rack 1. Therefore, the invention defined by claims 4, 6, 7, and 23-25 is neither taught nor suggested by the combination that would result by employing the teachings of the '486, '421 and '602 patents.

Claims 14, 15, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '486 and '421 patents in view of Hynds (US 5,064,216). The Office action acknowledges that patents '486 and '421 fails to show the bearing being of polymeric material. Although the spherical bearing 24 disclosed in the '216 patent is of polymeric material, nonetheless, the combination that includes the '486, '216, and '421 patents neither teaches or suggests the invention defined by Claims 14, 15, and 26. The bearing would not be secured to the end link; the cylindrical outer surface of the body would not be secured to the end link, as discussed above with reference to claims 4, 6, 7, and 23-25; and the end link would not be formed with a concave spherical surface, as discussed above with respect to the rejection of Claims 1, 21, and 22.

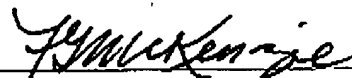
Claims 14, 15, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '688 patent in view of the '216 patent. The Office action acknowledges that the '688 patent does not disclose a bearing of polymeric material; therefore it cites the '216 patent for disclosing a bearing of polymeric material. However, as discussed above with respect to the rejection of Claims 1, 4, and 21-23 in which the '688 patent was a reference for the rejection, the '688 patents fails to disclose a body having a cylindrical outer surface, and an end link including a body portion having a concave spherical inner support surface.

Claims 18 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '486 patent in view of the '421 patent and further in view of Wolf et al. (USP 6,363,613). The Office action acknowledges that the '486 patent and the '421 patent fail to show the bearing secured with an adhesive. The '613 patent is

cited for allegedly teaching a bearing secured to the bar with an adhesive 12. Claim 1 and 21, from which Claims 18 and 27 respectively depend, have been distinguished over the combination resulting from combining the '486 patent and '421 patent. The combination that would result by combining the '486 patent and '421 patent with the '613 patent would not teach nor suggest the combination defined by independent Claims 1 and 11, because of the reasons discussed above with respect to the rejection of Claims 1 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The claims remaining in this application appear now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,


Frank G. McKenzie
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 29,242

Dated: August 15, 2006
MacMillan, Sobanski & Todd, LLC
One Maritime Plaza, Fourth Floor
720 Water Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604
(734) 542-0900
(734) 542-9569 (fax)